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Wednesday, 30 May 2001, 11.05 a.m.
New York

President	Mr. Cunningham	(United States of America)
Members	Bangladesh	Mr. Chowdhury
	China	Mr. Wang Yingfan
	Colombia	Mr. Valdivieso
	France	Mr. Levitte
	Ireland	Mr. Cooney
	Jamaica	Mr. Ward
	Mali	Mr. Kassé
	Mauritius	Mr. Neewoor
	Norway	Mr. Kolby
	Russian Federation	Mr. Lavrov
	Singapore	Mr. Mahbubani
	Tunisia	Mr. Jerandi
	Ukraine	Mr. Kuchinsky
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Jeremy Greenstock

Agenda

The situation in the Great Lakes region

Report of the Security Council mission to the Great Lakes region, 15-26 May 2001 (S/2001/521)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178.

01-38863 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 11.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Great Lakes region

Report of the Security Council mission to the Great Lakes region, 15-26 May 2001 (S/2001/521)

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Namibia, Rwanda, South Africa and Uganda, in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Nteturuye (Burundi), Mr. Ileka (Democratic Republic of the Congo), Mr. Andjaba (Namibia), Mr. Gasana (Rwanda), Ms. Ndhlovu (South Africa) and Mr. Beyendeza (Uganda) took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them the report on the Security Council mission to the Great Lakes region from 15 to 26 May 2001, document S/2001/521.

I should like to draw the attention of the members of the Council to document S/2001/525, which contains the text of a letter dated 24 May 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Zambia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council, transmitting the text of a communiqué produced at a joint meeting of the Political Committee for the Implementation of the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the United Nations Security Council mission to the Great Lakes region.

I would also like to welcome the Secretary-General to this meeting.

Mr. Mahbubani (Singapore): I apologize for interrupting the proceedings, Sir, but you referred in your introduction to the point that we are meeting here on the basis of prior consultations.

We were present at the consultations yesterday. I just want to reconfirm that the proceedings this morning will proceed on the basis of prior consultations, which established that we will first hear a representation by the leader of the mission, Ambassador Jean-David Levitte, and that we will then hear the representatives of the countries that we visited and spoke to involving this issue. My understanding is that this will be followed by the participation of the members of the Council, who will signal their interest in speaking and will be recognized in the order in which their requests to be heard are made, and that there will be no speakers' list, as we agreed yesterday.

I just want to reconfirm the understanding that we reached in the informal consultations yesterday.

The President: I indeed have a speakers' list here. I will be working off the indication of members who have indicated that they wish to speak and we will proceed on that basis. I have a list of speakers here and that is the basis on which we will proceed.

Mr. Mahbubani (Singapore): My understanding is that, at the informal consultations, we reached an understanding that there would be no speakers' list. I am curious to see who made the decision to change the Council's decision.

The President: I apologize if there was any misunderstanding. I am reminded that what I said yesterday in summing up was that we would hear from Ambassador Levitte, as chairman of the mission, then from representatives of the countries that the mission visited, if they wished to speak, and that we would then hear from Council members who wished to speak. I apologize if that implied that there was an agreement on how indication would be registered that members wished to speak, but I do have here a list of members who have indicated a wish to speak and I will stick with that list.

Mr. Mahbubani (Singapore): I will not hold up the proceedings any more, but there is a reason for my intervention. I think I owe an explanation to members of the Council for holding up the proceedings.

From time to time, several of us have met privately and have indeed expressed concern about the way these speakers' lists are prepared; that this is not done in a transparent fashion; and that there is no level playing field for all members of the Council when it comes to speaking before the Council. It is unfortunate that it had to surface in the way it did. I really do not mean to disrupt the proceedings, but I hope that this will be a useful signal to all members of the Council to ensure that, henceforth, when it comes to preparation of the speakers' list, it will be done in an open, transparent fashion, with a level playing field for all of us.

I hope that is not an unreasonable request to make. The only reason why I have raised it today is because, before the meeting, I checked with several members of the Council and they all have exactly the same understanding that I had yesterday, which is that there would be no speakers' list. So in the process of the last 24 hours a change has been made without consulting the members of the Council. I think that is not quite appropriate. That is the only reason why I have raised the issue.

I apologize to all members of the Council for raising the issue the way I did, but I think it is an important issue that all of us should be aware of, namely, that there is a problem that needs to be solved in due course. Again, my apologies.

The President: I thank you for raising your concerns. I can assure you as the President of the Council that I had no intention that there would be a speakers' list, or not. We did not address that subject yesterday.

Mr. Cooney (Ireland): If I may, I just want to endorse the remarks of the Singaporean Ambassador.

The President: So noted.

Mr. Neewoor (Mauritius): I wish to state that I also endorse the statement made by the Ambassador of Singapore.

Sir Jeremy Greenstock (United Kingdom): I think that the problem is being exaggerated, actually. I think we should discuss it in informal consultations.

The President: I want to repeat, since I am sitting here in the Chair, that my understanding of what we agreed yesterday did not include the question of whether there would be a speakers' list or not. I say this just for the record, as this is an on-the-record discussion. We will continue discussion of this subject later.

We will now turn to the business at hand.

Mr. Levitte (France) (*spoke in French*): The conclusions and recommendations drawn up by the 12 Ambassadors who were part of the Security Council mission are available in English, prior to being available in all the official languages.

I will address four points in my presentation. First I will make general comments about our mission; secondly, about the results we were able to achieve for the Democratic Republic of the Congo; thirdly, about the initiatives that should be taken for the Democratic Republic of the Congo in the days and weeks to come; and, finally, about the situation in Burundi. Let me begin with general comments.

Members will recall that this is the second mission in a year by the Security Council to the Great Lakes region, and the fourth meeting in the course of a year with the Political Committee for the Lusaka Agreement. Made up of 12 Ambassadors, the mission was an especially large one and, lasting 10 days, particularly long. We visited eight countries and met at length with 10 heads of State and two facilitators — President Masire for the inter-Congolese dialogue and President Mandela for Burundi. Beyond that, we had occasion to meet with representatives of political parties and civil society, with religious leaders and, of course, with leaders of the armed groups, both in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in Burundi. On behalf of the Security Council delegation, I would like to convey my warm thanks to all the people we met, whose warm reception of our mission was truly in keeping with Africa's great tradition of hospitality.

My second comment is to underscore the feeling we all had that there is today a real window of opportunity for the Democratic Republic of the Congo to move towards peace. The young President Joseph Kabila has a lot to do with that. There is also a widespread feeling in the region that there is no military solution to that war, and a feeling of weariness in the light of fighting that no longer makes much sense. Quite simply, our objective was to help the

parties that negotiated the Lusaka Agreement and those that negotiated the Arusha Agreement on Burundi to turn the page on war and, what is more difficult, to build lasting peace between them.

My third comment is to stress that with respect to last year's mission — and there were three of us on this year's mission who also participated in the mission last year — the atmosphere between the parties and the United Nations was radically different and, in fact, much more positive and trusting. The meetings were always constructive. We concluded that in fact a negotiating structure had been set up little by little, one that was without a doubt an optimal one.

In that context, I would like to refer to what happened about 12 years ago, when we were trying to find a way out of the crisis in Cambodia. At the time, we set up a conference that was including the countries of the region and the Security Council and that had co-chairmen. That is the same sort of arrangement we have set up among the partners of the region, the Political Committee for the Lusaka Agreement and the Security Council. In fact, that partnership was sealed when the United Nations and the Security Council gave the green light to deploy on the ground the contingents of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) and the observers. From that moment on, we are forced to succeed together; otherwise we will fail together. We are partners for peace.

My last comment is to once again clearly specify the role of the United Nations in the region. This is a question of helping the parties to implement their commitments by sending observers to monitor respect for those commitments on the ground, along with contingents to ensure the safety of the observers and the security of facilities, and to set up riverine units to make real progress in the economic sphere. It is therefore not at all a matter of imposing anything, and certainly not a matter of imposing peace. Rather, this is a matter of helping the parties to implement their own commitments. Beyond that, it is also a question of helping the parties to resolve their own differences in the interpretation of the agreements they themselves have negotiated. I believe that is an important role.

Our mission was not simply to observe events. At times it took the form of a true contribution to bridging differences. Indeed, it also provided for real negotiations between partners on sensitive issues to make progress towards peace. At times we had to remind all the parties of their commitments and their obligation to respect international law, human rights and humanitarian law.

If we can play this positive role, I think it is largely because of two traits that bring us together around this table: first, the duty of complete impartiality towards all of the parties to the conflict; and second, a strong unity joining all the members of the Council on the approach to be followed. I believe that our interlocutors were forced to acknowledge our impartiality and were certainly struck by the unity of our delegation. At this stage I would like to thank all of the ambassadors who were part of the delegation. We played together, as they say in sports, like a team passing the ball well and in an unfailing harmony.

Beyond these comments, what were the results that our mission was able to achieve?

We achieved results in the military sphere, which is obviously the first area to be taken into consideration. For four months the ceasefire has been holding, which is a first success; yet we have to strengthen it and move it forward. Beyond the ceasefire, the next stage is disengagement. Before we arrived, United Nations observers were able to confirm implementation of the agreement on the ground, except in Équateur Province, where the Front de libération du Congo (FLC) lead by Jean-Pierre Bemba had made demands that were not in accordance with the commitments that were signed and endorsed.

The Political Committee of the Lusaka Agreement and the Security Council obtained through their joint action a firm announcement on the part of Jean-Pierre Bemba, on the one hand, and the Political Committee, on the other. The message is simple and unambiguous: on Friday, 1 June, the FLC forces will withdraw from the zones they are currently occupying to the agreed positions. This is set out in the written communiqué adopted jointly by the Political Committee and the Security Council delegation following our meeting, so that things would be clarified. There was a parallel and unconditional decision to send humanitarian observers to Équateur Province, as elsewhere throughout the Congo, in order to improve the human rights and humanitarian situations.

The step following disengagement is naturally the stage of withdrawal of foreign forces, all foreign

forces. The objective is total and complete withdrawal. The Security Council has its own interpretation in resolution 1304 (2000), but everyone's concern is to move towards this withdrawal. It is reassuring to say before this Council that the ministers present at the Lusaka meeting, as well as the heads of State whom we met, all reaffirmed their agreement and their common objective, which is a total withdrawal of all foreign forces.

The date of 22 February 2001 as a D-day from which the timetable is calculated was confirmed. In fact, it should be stressed that the disengagement and withdrawal of certain forces has already begun. President Mugabe confirmed the withdrawal of several thousand Zimbabwean forces from Congolese territory. When we met with President Museveni in Kampala, he very clearly indicated that in three weeks all Ugandan forces will have left Congolese territory, with three exceptions: a battalion will remain in Bunia for the present; a battalion will remain in Buta; and finally, forces from six battalions will remain deployed in the Ruhenzori mountains along the border between Uganda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The final point concerning the military aspects in general is the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration or resettlement of the so-called negative forces. Events are not exactly in line with the Lusaka Agreement at present. There were undeniably thousands of Burundian Front pour la défense de la démocratie (FDD) militia who left the Democratic Republic of the Congo with their weapons to return to Burundi, thus doing more to transfer the war than to resolve the conflict.

Similarly, during our stay in Rwanda, there were incursions along the border by hundreds of former Rwandan Armed Forces (ex-FAR) and Interahamwe, and so we repeated to all of the heads of State concerned that it was crucial for us to be able to receive, under the auspices of the Joint Military Commission, very specific plans providing for disarmament and demobilization, then reintegration or resettlement of the "negative forces". We heard directly from General Mwaniki, Chairman of the Joint Military Commission, that he is working on an initial programme involving several thousand militia members, combatants, and he hopes to be able to convey this programme to us in the days or weeks to come.

In addition to these military aspects, it is very important that we see progress in the inter-Congolese political dialogue. There is no automatic link between the two, but we feel, as does the Political Committee, that these two approaches should move forward in parallel. Otherwise the entire peace process will be unbalanced.

From that point of view, the two meetings that we had with former President Masire, facilitator of the dialogue, were very encouraging. First, a date was set for the opening of the preparatory dialogue, the preparatory conference. The date is 16 July. Secondly, in order to properly prepare this initial meeting, Mr. Masire's representative in Kinshasa, Professor Ould Lebatt, and Ambassador Mogwe will travel through the 11 provinces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to prepare this dialogue, to identify in every province particularly representative individuals beyond the representatives enrolled in office, if I may say, which are the Government and the armed groups who have signed the Lusaka Agreement, as well as the political parties in Kinshasa.

Finally, one last particularly encouraging development. On the eve of our arrival in Kinshasa, President Kabila announced the abolishment of decree 194, which had forbidden any activity by political parties. We were able to spend an entire morning in dialogue with the political parties, while there were demonstrations in the streets of Kinshasa, with banners and slogans, for the first time in two and a half years. The political parties are now authorized to express themselves in public. We have heard the political parties, civil society and religious leaders express their hope that this inter-Congolese political dialogue can be held on Congolese territory. Of course, we must still identify the venue, but we have received this message and it is important to convey it.

Apart from those two aspects of the Lusaka Agreement, the Security Council delegation was determined to make progress in two areas that we thought were very important: the economic area and the human rights area. In the economic field, we were able to publicly announce some 40 small quick-impact projects that will be carried out in areas where MONUC contingents are deployed. It should be pointed out that when MONUC moves in, security and confidence are restored. In most cases the population has literally doubled in the span of a few weeks in the small communities where MONUC contingents are

deployed. If confidence is restored, in addition to security, the economy will also be restored. It was in this spirit, thanks to the mobilization of the international community in Kinshasa — the ambassadors there, the United Nations agencies and the representatives of the Bretton Woods institutions — that we were able to put together these 40 small projects, which are funded and will be carried out in the weeks to come.

More importantly, when the delegation was in Mbandaka, on the banks of the Congo River, we were able to announce the arrival on 7 June of the Uruguayan riverine unit. This is a major development, because it made it possible for us to announce the reopening of the river to commercial navigation. It should be known that in this country that no longer has road or rail infrastructure the rivers are the only means of transportation. It is a major and very positive development because until three years ago the city of Kinshasa was dependent on food products from Kisangani for its survival, and conversely, the clothes, salt and soap in Kisangani came from Kinshasa. It is that two-way traffic that we will be able to restore, thanks to the riverine unit and thanks to the establishment of a commission that, with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Kamel Morjane, will be able to bring together representatives of the Government, of the Rassemblement congolais pour la democratie (RCD-Goma) of the FLC and of the two neighbouring countries concerned — the Central African Republic and the Republic of the Congo. This must all be achieved with everyone's cooperation. It is a major development. There should be no obstacles impeding the achievement of this development so anxiously awaited by millions of Congolese.

The second aspect that we think is very important and that we have developed systematically with all our interlocutors, as well as in all our public statements, is the area of human rights and humanitarian rights. We have strongly emphasized that we must make progress in these two areas. Roberto Garretón, the Special Rapporteur, will visit the country more frequently. As I said, we will deploy human rights and humanitarian observers with all MONUC contingents. We have encouraged the non-governmental organizations and the religious leaders to publicize the massacres of which they become aware, because secrecy is often the accomplice of these massacres. The very fact that information is circulating is a deterrent. But beyond that, we have said publicly, and to all our interlocutors in the Congo, that impunity must come to an end, that procedures must be established to prosecute those who carry out massacres and that it is up to the Congolese, within the framework of their dialogue, to decide what procedures should be followed in this regard. Those are the results we have achieved.

I will now turn to a third aspect: actions to be undertaken in the weeks and months to come. In the military sphere, the most urgent matter is to help the Ugandan army leave Congolese territory, as was decided by President Museveni. From that point of view, two initiatives should be taken immediately. The first is to help one of the Ugandan battalions, situated east of Kisangani, leave by using one of Kisangani's two airports, because the alternative is for this battalion to open a road through the Congolese forest. This, obviously, would be a burden that we should spare that battalion. Unfortunately — and we said this very clearly at the Lusaka meeting — the town of Kisangani is not demilitarized today. It should have been so a year ago, in implementation of Security Council resolution 1304 (2000). It is still not demilitarized because armed elements of the RCD-Goma are still in the town. They are impeding the use of the airports by the withdrawing Ugandan troops. Therefore, this must be handled urgently. The authority of the Security Council is at stake, and Kamel Morjane, with the Council's active support, should be able to deal with this item in the days to come.

For the rules of the game to be respected, the withdrawal of Ugandan forces, announced by President Museveni, should be observed in the field, through the presence of MONUC observers. Beyond this initial aspect, we must carry out the co-location between MONUC's chiefs of staff, who are in Kinshasa, and the Joint Military Commission's chiefs of staff, who are still in Lusaka. As regards the site, everything is ready. From the security point of view, the arrival of a contingent of 200 Tunisian soldiers and officers when we were in Kinshasa provided a very strong reassurance for those who might have had doubts about their security. This was the response awaited so that parties that hesitated to take this step could come to Kinshasa. The co-location must take place as soon as possible.

The third item from the military standpoint is before us. On 15 June, the current MONUC mandate comes to an end. We will have to find the means to

move forward. Since we are awaiting detailed plans that the Political Committee must convey to us on the basis of the work that has been done thus far by the Joint Military Commission, whether concerning the withdrawal of forces or the disarmament of the negative forces, we are not in a position today to recommend moving on to phase III. We have found a formula that proposes a transition towards phase III.

The ceiling of 5,537 men that was decided by Security Council resolution 1291 (2000) seems to be adequate. It is a comfortable ceiling and gives us some leeway for action. We remain under the ceiling of 5,537 men, and we are ready to move towards phase III. We are opening the door of the transition to phase III. Now the ball is in the court of the Political Committee and of the Joint Military Commission to provide us as soon as possible with the detailed plans that we need in order to be able to plan, under the aegis of the Secretary-General, the next steps of deployment on Congolese soil, of MONUC observers, and, if necessary, additional contingents. That covers the military sphere.

As for the national dialogue, MONUC must certainly assist the facilitator's team in moving throughout the country, which has no infrastructure, with aeroplanes or by making helicopters available. Our Security Council has the feeling that it could discreetly help bring about a consensus, together with President Masire, on which city would be the best site for the national dialogue and would welcome it as a symbol of the reconciliation of the Congolese people.

A difficult point for which we do not have a solution at present is the provisional administration of zones evacuated by foreign forces. It is clear that the Congolese forces that are currently deployed will remain in their zone, whether space is opened up by the Government of Kinshasa, by the FLC or by the RCD Goma. We are afraid that in some very well-identified areas in the eastern part of the country the withdrawal of forces could lead to security risks. We are very aware of that point, even though I stress that it is not up to MONUC but rather to the Congolese parties themselves to ensure security in the zones under their control. It is up to them to maintain law, order and security in these areas. But this point concerns us as well, because we are responsible actors.

From the economic standpoint, besides what I have already mentioned, we returned from Kinshasa with the feeling that the devaluation that was decided upon immediately after our departure is bringing considerable turbulence to the Congolese economy and social life. We are attentive to this, because, while it is good to set up a peace plan, we also have to concern ourselves with social stability, especially in the capital. This is a message that we will relay to the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, which are concerned with this situation themselves.

Another economic point I wish to make regards the pillaging of the Congo's natural resources. This is mentioned in the report, as it was at each of our meetings with the heads of State concerned, and we stressed that our message was clear: the pillaging must stop. We are not aiming to punish; we are aiming to encourage. The dialogue has begun. It is up to everyone to take the necessary measures to rectify what needs to be rectified. As for the Council, on the basis of the addendum that is being prepared, we will meet in three months to have a more detailed discussion of the situation and of the developments that we hope will have taken place within the next three months.

Finally, we proposed a project for the future that is not new but that today is increasingly topical: the idea of a conference of all the States concerned, those of greater Central Africa — a regional conference — in order to deal with the matter of security between States in the region, their integrated economic development and human rights issues, especially minority rights. These are the three categories that we have suggested. The idea was well received everywhere we went, even if some stressed that we first had to make progress towards peace in every country before organizing the conference, but the idea is once again topical.

The fourth and last part of my statement deals with Burundi. As much as we were encouraged by the situation and developments in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, we remain quite concerned about an impasse — a kind of vicious circle — in which Burundi finds itself locked at the present time. We met with President Buyoya, with the political parties and with the leaders of the two armed groups that are threatening to renew hostilities. We visited President Mandela at length in Johannesburg on the first day of our visit to the region. We said very clearly to the leaders of the two armed groups that there was no military solution. We have the most respected personality in the world dealing with the fate of Burundi, and he has proposed a path to peace, so it is

certainly unacceptable that some would consider taking the capital by force or pursuing offensives, even if only to support a political process. The path of dialogue exists, and President Mandela embodies it. The Arusha Agreement is on the table. If some have corrections, additions or criticisms to make, they must do so around the negotiating table.

There is a temptation in the region to impose sanctions against those two groups. We reached an agreement with President Museveni, who is the Chairman of the group of States concerned, that in the immediate future the messages of the Security Council to the two groups must be used in order to consult the grass roots. We are waiting for their responses. We will give them some time; but if by the deadline, which has not been set, there is no positive response from the two armed groups as to their intention to return to the negotiating table, then perhaps the heads of State of the region could decide among themselves to take measures.

President Buyoya spoke about his deep concern over the return, as I said earlier, of combatants from the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We spoke about this clearly with President Kabila. He also spoke of his concern about the refugee camps that house 500,000 Burundian refugees on Tanzanian soil, on the other side of the border, and that, according to President Buyoya, are a starting point for quick operations carried out by armed groups on Burundian soil. In our meeting with President Mkapa in Dar es Salaam, we suggested that a possible idea would be to set up a Tanzanian-Burundian commission in order to study this matter and to find concrete, pragmatic ways of trying to reduce the tension.

My final comment about Burundi is that we have to find a way that would allow President Mandela, the resident facilitator in Johannesburg, and the Secretary-General's Representative in Bujumbura, Mr. Jean Arnault, who has done an excellent job, to be able to work better together. We made contact with President Mandela after having spoken with the Secretary-General, but we undoubtedly need some imagination and creativity when it comes to finding ways to help President Mandela succeed in Burundi.

I would like to conclude by warmly commending, on behalf of our entire delegation, the remarkable work carried out by the United Nations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in Burundi. The Senegalese contingent, which we saw in the field in Mbandaka, working under extremely difficult conditions, provides a clear example of what the United Nations can accomplish. As I said earlier, we were also very impressed by the arrival of the Tunisians.

In addition, I would like to pay tribute to two men: Kamel Morjane, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Democratic Republic of the Congo who, with exemplary determination, caution, wisdom, readiness and unremitting effort, has managed to create something that last year seemed to be impossible — the clear climate of trust and cooperation that now exists between the United Nations and the Congolese authorities, whoever they may be; and Jean Arnault in Bujumbura, who, under equally difficult conditions, has done a remarkable job of engaging all the parties in dialogue. Finally, I would like to pay tribute to all the members of the Secretary-General's team, who helped us to prepare for the trip. It was a pleasure to be able to carry out such a well-prepared mission.

Let us be clear: the United Nations will be deployed for a long time. We must carefully follow up the results of this mission on an almost daily basis. We will have to move gradually towards peace. We cannot stop along the path, because stopping would mean retreating. I believe that our entire delegation has that determination, because if the United Nations and the Security Council does not get involved, who will go there?

The President: I thank the Ambassador of France for his report.

I want to express the Council's appreciation for the efforts of all the members of the mission and for Ambassador Levitte's leadership.

I now give the floor to the Secretary-General.

The Secretary-General: At the outset, I wish to pay tribute to the just-concluded Security Council mission to the Great Lakes region. I believe that that timely and important visit served to consolidate the recent momentum for peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and demonstrated the importance that the United Nations attaches to the peace process there. We heard a very eloquent and comprehensive briefing from Ambassador Levitte, who led the team.

By visiting not only the States signatories of the Lusaka Agreement, but also Burundi, the Security Council recognized the linkage between the conflicts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Burundi. It is clear that we will have to work to ensure the implementation of both the Lusaka and the Arusha Agreements if we are to achieve peace throughout the region.

The Democratic Republic of Congo, a vast and impoverished country devastated by conflict, with virtually no infrastructure, presents an immense operational, administrative and logistical challenge to any outside mission. However, we are now faced with a genuine window of opportunity for peace and security in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and I think that Ambassador Levitte described it very clearly.

An important signal was the reopening of the river network in the Democratic Republic of the Congo for humanitarian assistance and commercial exchanges between Kinshasa and Kisangani. More specifically, there has been progress on disengagement, and the United Nations has been actively assisting the parties in implementing their commitments. The United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) has deployed 490 military observers, who, supported by 1,660 troops, are verifying the disengagement. Already, MONUC has verified close to 60 per cent of the redeployment positions.

In the near future, the parties will be finalizing plans for the withdrawal of all foreign troops, as well as for the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration, repatriation and resettlement of armed groups. This process will also present a major challenge to MONUC and the international community as a whole. The planning for these operations has already begun — of course, we need to work with those on the ground — and must be incorporated into the overall planning for phase III of the Mission. I think that the insight that the Council has brought will also be very helpful as we move to transition and implementation of phase III. My recommendations for that phase will be contained in my forthcoming report to the Security Council, to be issued in mid-June. I hope the international community will also contribute generously.

Significantly, there has also been a change in the political climate within the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Recently, we have seen progress in the inter-Congolese dialogue, about which we have just heard; that is an indispensable element of the peace process. Recent developments include the signing by the Congolese parties on 4 May in Lusaka of a Declaration of Principles for the conduct of the dialogue; the announcement on 17 May by President Kabila lifting the ban on political parties; and the announcement by the facilitator for the inter-Congolese dialogue, Sir Ketumile Masire, that he will convene a preparatory meeting for the dialogue on 16 July, as we have just heard, which could open the way for political reconciliation.

Among the remaining urgent challenges in the peace process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, I wish to highlight the following. First, with regard to the humanitarian situation, recent political and military developments have resulted in greater access to vulnerable communities, including some which had been beyond our reach since the start of the war. Needs assessments are currently being carried out in these areas. It is imperative that additional resources be made available to address the emerging requirements, as well as to fund quick-impact projects that can bring immediate benefits to the population.

Frankly speaking, I believe that current international support for humanitarian activities in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is unacceptably low, with only 20 per cent of the 2001 consolidated appeal for $139.4 million being funded. The Council may wish to take up this issue with donors as a matter of urgency.

Secondly, I would like to speak about human rights. I think we have heard quite a lot about human rights. The dire situation concerning the human rights of civilians is well known to Council members. I believe that it is important to step up MONUC's monitoring activities in this area without delay. In cooperation with the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, I have taken steps to increase the number of human rights officers in MONUC. Within this area of concern, the question of impunity has to be addressed by investigating alleged massacres and other major violations of human rights. Without accountability for the most severe crimes, there can be no lasting peace.

Thirdly, as the Council is aware, the use of child soldiers has been pervasive in all fighting forces in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. My Special

Representative for Children and Armed Conflict, Olara Otunnu, is currently visiting the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and I am looking forward to receiving his recommendations on how to address this issue in a comprehensive manner.

Separately, the security situation continues to be precarious, especially in the east of the county. In Ituri province, where six workers from the International Committee of the Red Cross were killed recently, only one international organization, Memisa, has resumed work outside Bunia, the provincial capital. At present, there are only three United Nations field security officers for the entire country, which is totally inadequate.

We face a truly daunting challenge in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. However, I believe that there is a foundation for peace, based on progress in three areas: the holding of the ceasefire, about which we have just heard; the steady implementation of the disengagement of troops; and the liberalization of political life. As members well know, peace will not be brought to the Democratic Republic of the Congo by MONUC alone. The leaders and the peoples of the region must lead the way and create a new culture of peace and coexistence. Beyond the region, every member of the United Nations family has a role to play in helping to secure the peace and in improving the lives of the Congolese people.

I applaud the Council's commitment and contribution to this cause and look forward to building on the progress that has been achieved. I think the Council should be very proud of its mission and of what it has achieved on the ground.

The President: The next speaker is the representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Ileka (Democratic Republic of the Congo) (*spoke in French*): I wish first of all, on behalf of my Government and on my own account, to convey our deep condolences to the Government and the people of the Republic of Zimbabwe on the untimely death of His Excellency Mr. Moven Mahachi, Minister of Defence, who died last Saturday in a traffic accident. Mr. Mahachi played a key role in defending my country's national sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence. His sudden death is a great loss to the Congolese people. At this sad time, our thoughts go first to Mr. Mahachi's widow and children, and we convey our condolences to the family of the deceased.

On 3 May, the Council heard my Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, His Excellency Mr. Léonard She Okitundu, say how pleased he was to see you, Sir, presiding over the work of the Security Council for the month of May, which has indeed been crucial and decisive for a final solution to the war of aggression of which my country has been the victim since August 1998. This is reflected also in the important message of peace and reconciliation just conveyed by the Security Council mission to all the countries of the Great Lakes region.

My delegation welcomes the presence here today of the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan; we take this opportunity to pay tribute to him for having retained the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo as one of his top priorities. Our thanks go also to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Kamel Morjane, and to all the United Nations personnel working in the Democratic Republic of the Congo for the excellent work they are doing in my country.

My delegation conveys its sincere thanks to Ambassador Jean-David Levitte of France and to the other members of the Security Council mission for the clarity of the report now before the Council, despite its late publication. We thank them for having come and for having successfully carried out a Council mission to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and to the remainder of the region that bore a message of hope and peace: a source of reassurance to the peoples of Congo and of the rest of the region.

In my delegation's view, the mission sent a strong signal and conveyed the Security Council's genuine, unanimous determination to move ahead in the peace process, to put an end to the plundering of the wealth of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and to take up the question of the massive violations of human rights and of international humanitarian law that have been taking place on the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo since the aggression began.

My Government also welcomes the partnership established two years ago between the Security Council and the Political Committee for the implementation of the Ceasefire Agreement for the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It is our hope that this cooperation will continue until real peace is restored to my country.

It is time for the Security Council to declare that the war of aggression has exceeded the bounds of what is tolerable and acceptable, and that the occupying forces must immediately return home without further ado. The death of 3 million Congolese civilians, as reported by the non-governmental International Rescue Committee, is not a mere regrettable occurrence; it is a genuine tragedy. The massacres in my country resulted from a painstakingly planned policy of "cleansing", especially on the part of Rwanda, in reprisal for what had taken place seven years earlier and in line with a policy of settling people from that country in Kivu and Maniema provinces. Those responsible for the genocide of Congolese people must be prosecuted and punished.

Responsibility is borne also by the Ugandan authorities who instigated ethnic discord between the Hema and Lendu communities and who have played a decisive role in the three wars in Kisangani, where more than 1,000 Congolese lost their lives. The Burundian, Ugandan and Rwandan authorities responsible for the flight of thousands of Congolese — who are now either refugees or internally displaced persons — must also be brought to justice. The leaders of those countries must understand that the little regard they still enjoy within the international community is no guarantee of impunity. There is no amnesty for them; they must realize that sooner or later they will be brought to justice.

My Government reminds the aggressors of their obligations with respect to the safety and security of civilians under the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949. We stress that the occupying forces must be held responsible for human rights violations in territory under their control. In that connection, my Government regrets the deplorable events that led to the April murder of members of the staff of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and the recent abduction of members of a forestry company that was illegally exploiting timber in the eastern part of my country, which is under occupation.

It is important, indeed crucial, that the process of disengagement and withdrawal be accelerated in order to put an end to the wretched situation of the Congolese people.

The Security Council can no longer be satisfied with repetitive, thundering declarations about possible movement towards disengagement or withdrawal of troops. The Council should abide by its own resolutions and force the parties to implement them as well. In Lusaka, the mission and the Political Committee welcomed a statement by one of the signatories, relating to the Ugandan occupation zone, that disengagement would occur in agreed areas as from 1 June 2001. Security pretexts cannot be a precondition for disengagement by that party.

That is a challenge that the Security Council must take up. What will happen if that party makes no move towards withdrawal in the next two days? Will the Council await another statement of good intentions, thus risking the loss of its credibility? Or will the Council finally use its powers to impose enforcement measures on that party in conformity with the provisions of resolution 1341 (2001) of 22 February 2001? Those questions deserve an appropriate answer.

The approach to the withdrawal of foreign troops includes a timetable that began on 22 February 2001; this derives from resolution 1341 (2001). Our understanding of this is that by 15 June 2001 the parties should provide information about the deployment of their troops and should issue the order to withdraw.

A parallel process of the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation or resettlement of armed groups should be implemented in conformity with the Lusaka Agreement, which, I would recall, recognizes the need to address the security concerns of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and of neighbouring countries.

In order to make a real contribution to the preparation and implementation of the plans for withdrawal and for disarmament, demobilization, resettlement and reintegration in the context of the third phase of MONUC deployment, my Government intends to provide all the appropriate information in due course.

The extent of the withdrawal, the geographical area it covers, the rejection of a Congo divided in perpetuity and the need to tackle the many tasks of peacemaking after the withdrawal of all foreign troops will require a significant and appreciable increase in the civilian, military and associated personnel of MONUC, as well as a broadening of its mandate to allow it to carry out the accompanying policies aimed at ensuring peace, security and stability in the

Democratic Republic of the Congo. My Government therefore invites the Council to begin considering a possible increase in MONUC personnel once phase III of deployment is initiated.

My Government has noted the proposal of President Masire, the facilitator of the inter-Congolese dialogue, to convene the preparatory meeting for the dialogue on 16 July 2001. In this connection, I wish once again to confirm that my Government will spare no effort in helping the facilitator so that the meeting can be held on the scheduled date.

Similarly, it is our hope that, together, we will be able to convene the inter-Congolese dialogue as soon as possible, bringing together all the socio-political stratums and movements in our country without any outside interference or military pressure so that they can consider and reflect on the future of the Congolese nation and have their say on the new institutions of the next Republic. The promulgation on 17 May 2001 of law 001/2001, on the organization and functioning of political parties and groupings, may be appreciated in that light.

The dates and venue for the inter-Congolese dialogue will be decided by its participants. As of now, my Government can affirm its readiness for the preparatory meeting and the dialogue to be held in the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

My Government will do its utmost to ensure security for all participants in the preparatory meeting and in the dialogue itself. Likewise, my Government assures the Council that it will take all possible measures to provide for the security of the members of the Joint Military Commission (JMC), which is to share the headquarters of MONUC in Kinshasa. In so doing, my Government will undoubtedly enjoy the support of the Tunisian troops of MONUC deployed in the capital. This co-location must take place so that the JMC can discharge its mandate in the best possible conditions.

Last year, the city of Kisangani was ground-zero in the war of aggression. Kisangani was the theatre of exceptionally violent clashes between the regular armed forces of Uganda and Rwanda, in flagrant violation of the Ceasefire Agreement. The fighting, the most recent outbreak of which took place under the eyes of MONUC, caused enormous loss of human life and the destruction of the economic, social and cultural infrastructures of the city. The reasons for the fighting were well known and have since been confirmed. It was a struggle to control the natural resources of the third economic hub of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The mission was able to see for itself that the martyred city of Kisangani has yet to be demilitarized, in violation of the relevant provisions of resolution 1304 (2000) of 16 June 2000. My Government would ask the Security Council to take the appropriate measures to ensure the effective demilitarization of Kisangani and to require the notoriously recidivist Uganda and Rwanda to provide reparations for the loss of human life and the material damage in the city.

The Rwandan troops must totally evacuate Kisangani. The Ugandan troops mired and blocked in the outskirts of the city must be authorized to return home. The welcome given by the people of Kisangani to the Moroccan troops is an indication in itself of the entire Congolese people's weariness and rejection of the presence of these uninvited and unwanted troops. The Moroccan troops of MONUC are perfectly able to provide the necessary security for the city of Kisangani. Their presence must be reinforced. The ability of the United Nations to meet the challenge of demilitarizing Kisangani will bear witness to the authority of the Security Council.

With respect to the situation in Burundi, my delegation is pleased that, for the first time, a delegation led by the Minister of Defence of Burundi was invited to participate in the joint meeting of the Political Committee for the Implementation of the Ceasefire Agreement in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Security Council of the United Nations in order to discuss the process of disarming, demobilizing, resettling and reintegrating all the armed groups. We are also pleased that, during its visit, the Council was able to meet with the leaders of the Burundian Front pour la défense de la démocratie.

As members of the Council know, although Burundi is not a signatory to the Ceasefire Agreement in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, that country, despite ever less credible denials and refutations, continues to maintain a significant number of troops in the territory of my country.

The Lusaka meetings are thus very important in that they may encourage Burundi to continue the withdrawal of its troops that was observed last March, as we emphasized in a note addressed to the Security

Council last April and which the Secretary-General noted in paragraph 28 of his seventh report on MONUC. These meetings are also a warning to that country that it must immediately halt the redeployment of its troops observed last week in the Kalemie region and withdraw from that city and from the regions of Fizi and Uvira, which are currently under the complete control of the regular army of Burundi.

Last April in Libreville, Gabon, the question of the withdrawal of Burundi's troops was addressed in talks at the highest level between my country and Burundi. We had intended to continue our discussions in Bujumbura in conjunction with the work of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa. We would have made significant progress had it not been for an attempted coup d'état by young officers of the Burundian army.

The Lusaka meetings are therefore very important to us because, on the one hand, they have cleared my Government of any involvement and borne witness to its impartiality in that country's domestic crisis and, on the other, they have created a new dimension in the inter-Burundian negotiations.

We are convinced that a settlement of the crisis in Burundi will have a positive impact on the settlement of the war of aggression. We therefore ardently hope that the Democratic Republic of the Congo will no longer have to suffer the negative impact of the situation in Burundi. We hope that the brotherly people of Burundi will be able to re-establish national concord as soon as possible. We urge President Nelson Mandela to spare no effort to refloat the good ship Burundi and to pilot it safely to port, in particular through the process begun at Arusha.

The Congolese people has suffered and continues to suffer with exemplary courage the consequences of a lengthy political transition that has had devastating consequences for its economic infrastructure, as well as of two armed conflicts, one of which is ongoing. Indeed, the Democratic Republic of the Congo today is a poor and heavily indebted country, whose consecutive conflicts have exacerbated the rapid destruction of its economic fabric and social infrastructure, which had already been heavily damaged by years of mismanagement.

Throughout the provinces of our country, access to the villages has become extremely precarious as a result of the destruction of roads and of the lack of security. The entire health-care system has crumbled, bringing malnutrition, recurring epidemics and a shortage of medicine. According to figures of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, approximately 16 million people — 33 per cent of the Congolese population — are directly affected by the war. Likewise, the chronic devaluation of our national currency, in particular the most recent such recommended by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, has had a devastating impact on daily life in the Congo.

The Congolese people were therefore greatly relieved to learn of the opening of the River Congo between Kinshasa and Mbandaka. We have great hope that the imminent arrival of Uruguayan troops of MONUC at Mbandaka will provide security along the river, allow goods and people to resume travel and contribute through such trade to relaunching economic activity in the affected areas.

The international community is therefore invited to help my country to emerge from the crisis in which it finds itself by, among other things, participating in initiatives aimed at restoring lasting peace and resuming partnerships and bilateral and multilateral cooperation in accordance with our national development plans that will be formulated for the economic and social well-being of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. As peace is a prerequisite for development, the Security Council and the international community are also invited to address the issue of the Congolese situation from the perspective of an appropriate post-conflict response.

In its tireless quest to live in peace and harmony with all of its neighbours, the Democratic Republic of the Congo fully endorses the idea of an international conference on peace and security in the Great Lakes region. My country is convinced that the holding of such a conference will be one of the peaceful ways of bringing peace and understanding to our entire region, which has suffered so much for almost 10 years now. All countries in the region face the same task of strengthening domestic peace and achieving economic reconstruction. Resuming good-neighbourly relations will be essential for all of our countries. It is up to us to restore peace to the Great Lakes region and to create the appropriate conditions for economic and social development. If it is well nurtured, recovery in the Democratic Republic of the Congo can only be positive

for the whole Great Lakes region, of which Rwanda and Burundi are part. Although of course in a different way, we will together be able to rebuild the regulatory mechanism that existed not so long ago between our three countries to help ensure peaceful coexistence. That mechanism also played an important role in conflict prevention and was aimed at stabilization throughout the Great Lakes region.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to say that my Government and the people of the Congo were greatly impressed by the visit of the Security Council mission, by the members themselves and by their commitment to the cause of peace in my country. We believe that the Democratic Republic of the Congo will regain peace, dignity and its territorial integrity. That will be a victory for the Security Council and for the entire international community. We extend an invitation in advance to the members of the Security Council to visit us again in the Great Lakes region once peace is restored in order to see the great achievement to which they will have contributed.

The President: The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Rwanda. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Gasana (Rwanda) (*spoke in French*): The Government of Rwanda would like to congratulate the Security Council on its important initiative, under the auspices and with the support of the Secretary-General, to visit the Great Lakes region of Africa. For us, that visit was a success not only for the Council, which conducted the visit, but also for the countries of the region that it visited. With the arrival in the field of the most important body of the United Nations, the Lusaka peace Agreement has been reinvigorated and its signatories have been given determination to see it succeed.

Nevertheless, the disarmament and disengagement of the negative forces, which include those who planned and carried out the genocide in Rwanda — namely, the Interahamwe militia and the former Rwandan Armed Forces (ex-FAR), which have been welcomed with open arms on Congolese soil since the time of the Mobutu regime — continue to be necessary. Those forces will continue to be an obstacle unless they are brought under control. All support provided for those forces, no matter by whom, must immediately and definitely come to an end.

The Government of Rwanda is pleased to see that in the report presented by the Ambassador of France, who headed the mission, the Security Council concluded from its visit that there is a need for assistance for the rehabilitation, reconstruction and social and economic development of countries that have been victims of conflicts. That international solidarity must take shape very urgently, especially for Rwanda, which is unfortunately the African victim that has suffered most from the odious crime of genocide. The members of the Council were able to visit genocide sites during their visit to Rwanda and were able to realize the enormity of the crimes that were committed.

In that regard, were the Security Council to pay particular attention to the report of the commission led by former Swedish Prime Minister Carlsson and to the implementation of its recommendations regarding post-genocide financial assistance to Rwanda, it would be of great assistance to us.

The Political Committee for the Lusaka peace Agreement, which is headed by Rwanda, will continue to cooperate closely with the Security Council in order that our desire to see the Lusaka peace Agreement implemented in all its clauses can be realized.

Allow me to conclude this brief statement by warmly congratulating you, Mr. President, on your remarkable presidency of the Council in the month of May 2001, as well as on having so effectively conducted the current and previous debates.

The President: I thank the representative of Rwanda for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of South Africa. I invite her to take a seat at the Council table and to make her statement.

Ms. Ndhlovu (South Africa): I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of May. We would also like to commend the Security Council, under your presidency, for the important initiative it took in dispatching a mission to the Great Lakes region and for conducting this open briefing.

My delegation would also like to thank Ambassador Levitte for his comprehensive briefing. The mission's visit to the region was of historic importance in that it engaged, and consulted with, a wide range of interested parties. The visit has also been

able to refocus world attention on the conflict in the Great Lakes region. Similarly, the visit will go a long way in promoting the credibility of the Security Council among the people of the Great Lakes region.

My delegation believes that, now more than ever, there exists a great chance to achieve peace and stability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We hope that the momentum developed towards peace will be sustained, and that it will bring about an accelerated end to the conflict. That momentum could be greatly sustained by the speedy deployment of phase III of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC).

My delegation has taken note of the report of the mission, and though we have not yet had the opportunity to study it, we hope that the views and proposals put forward by the interested parties will better inform the future course of action to be taken by the Security Council. The Council's involvement should be further supported by the Lusaka signatories by observing the ceasefire and by abiding by their commitments under the Kampala and Harare disengagement plans.

The inter-Congolese dialogue still remains key to the establishment of a broad-based, democratic process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In this regard, my delegation welcomes the recent announcement by the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to allow political parties to participate in the inter-Congolese dialogue.

In order to establish a sustainable peace, it is vital that the peace process be complemented by a rejuvenation of economic activity in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The re-establishment of the communications and transportation infrastructure will be critical in achieving this rejuvenation. In this regard, my delegation wishes to stress the importance of the international community's support for the implementation of quick-impact projects. Such a dual approach to achieving peace and stability will ensure that as the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo trade their guns for peace, they will be able to focus their energies on the reconstruction of their country.

My delegation believes that ultimately it is the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo who will determine their destiny. However, we believe that the international community can contribute to the restoration of peace, stability and development in that country. South Africa would like to see a situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo where all the people could benefit from the enormous natural resources that the country has been endowed with. If a state of freedom from fear can be achieved, freedom from want will be a long-term benefit.

The President: The next speaker is the representative of Namibia. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Andjaba (Namibia): I wish to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this important meeting. It is once again testimony to the seriousness with which your delegation views the situation in the Great Lakes region and particularly in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We wish to thank the Secretary-General for his presence this morning and for the very important statement he delivered. We commend him for his continued peace efforts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

I also wish to thank Ambassador Levitte for his excellent presentation of the report of the Security Council mission to the Great Lakes region and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It is clear from the report that the mission benefited greatly from Ambassador Levitte's outstanding leadership qualities and professionalism. His diplomatic skills in discharging the responsibilities of the Council have allowed the mission to successfully execute its mandate and to provide the Council with a comprehensive report with valuable conclusions and recommendations.

My delegation is glad to note that the Security Council mission found much that was encouraging in its visit to the Great Lakes region. My delegation wishes to underscore the fact that the window of opportunity for peace clearly exists mainly because of plausible peace initiatives by the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the commitment of the parties to the implementation of the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement. It is therefore our hope that the Security Council is now convinced about the urgent need for its continued strong support to enable the speedy and successful implementation of the Lusaka Agreement.

The timely planning and approval of phase III in the deployment of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) is crucial for the smooth implementation of

the peace process. In this regard, we welcome the mission's recommendation that the Security Council consider approving a transition to phase III for MONUC activities. In all this, it is again submitted that the complexity of the Democratic Republic of the Congo peace process should be taken into account when considering the size and mandate of deploying phase III of MONUC.

My delegation shares the concern expressed by the mission about the reluctance to disengage on the part of the Movement for the Liberation of the Congo (MLC). We agree that the Security Council should closely monitor the situation and ensure that the MLC disengages, as was promised at the meeting with the Political Committee.

Another concern that remains is the continuing occupation of Kisangani. We call on the Security Council to continue to insist that Kisangani be demilitarized without further delay, as provided for in resolution 1304 (2000). We also support the mission's recommendation that the Council consider further measures to promote compliance with this resolution. It is correct that this city could play a much broader role in the economic and political life of the country.

My delegation furthermore reiterates its deep concern for the dire humanitarian situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, particularly in the eastern part of the country. We call on the Security Council to ensure that those responsible for human rights violations in that part of the country are brought to justice.

My delegation also welcomes the progress made in the preparation for the inter-Congolese dialogue. We wish to commend Sir Ketumile Masire, the neutral facilitator, and we welcome his proposal to convene a preparatory meeting for the dialogue on 16 July. However, we wish to emphasize that the dialogue is for the Congolese people, and it should be conducted without foreign interference.

With regard to the extension of civil administration to zones vacated by foreign forces in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in our view the Government should take over such functions. We call on the international community to assist the Government in carrying out these responsibilities.

My delegation agrees that a complete return to peace will be stimulated by an increase of economic activities in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We welcome the reopening of the Congo River, which, apart from the economic advantages, will also have positive consequences for confidence-building and the strengthening of a sense of national unity. The implementation of quick-impact projects will be welcome, but we share the recommendation that the international community consider much broader economic assistance to the Democratic Republic of the Congo to accompany the onset of peace.

Furthermore, my delegation wishes to reiterate its concern regarding the plundering of the natural resources of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Security Council should adopt urgent measures to stop these practices. In this regard, we welcome the Council's recommendation that if no progress is made within three months, the Council should consider taking the measures necessary to put an end to any continuing illegitimate exploitation.

My delegation welcomes the efforts of the Security Council mission to provide momentum to the peace process in Burundi, and we support its recommendations. We also commend the efforts of the facilitator of the Burundi peace process, former President Nelson Mandela, and we continue to support his important work. My delegation also reiterates its full support for an international conference on the Great Lakes region at an appropriate time.

In conclusion, my delegation wishes to reiterate its continued commitment to the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement and the Harare and Kampala disengagement plans and their speedy and full implementation. We also wish to reiterate our full cooperation with MONUC.

The President: I thank the representative of Namibia for his kind words addressed to the United States delegation.

The next speaker on my list is the representative of Uganda. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Beyendeza (Uganda): It is an honour for me to participate in this open briefing of the Security Council on the important subject of the Great Lakes region. This follows the Security Council mission to the area. Therefore, on behalf of the Government of Uganda, I thank you, Mr. President, and all the members of the Council for this opportunity.

In welcoming back the Security Council team that visited the Great Lakes region, including my country, my delegation hopes not only that the team succeeded in carrying out the terms of reference with which it was mandated, but also that the Council will now be enriched by the tremendous experience the members must have acquired on this visit and that it will be able to use it to further the cause of peace in the region.

Within the framework of the terms of reference of the mission, my delegation would like to use this opportunity to update the Security Council on two areas: the progress in Uganda's troop withdrawal, which is in support of the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement, and the issue of the natural resources of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The withdrawal of Ugandan troops is progressing well. I could say that it is progressing according to schedule. Last Friday, the Uganda People's Defence Forces completed its troop withdrawal from the northeastern Congolese town of Isiro. The second phase of complete withdrawal of the Ugandan troops started yesterday, Tuesday, from a town called Gemena. Members may remember that in February 2001, our 7th Battalion was withdrawn from Gemena, but some units remained behind, guarding the airport. It is hoped that by the end of this week the last group will be pulled out.

After the Gemena pullout, our troops will then leave eight other Congolese towns: Dongo, Basankusu, Gbadolite, Lisala, Bitembo, Beni, Kanyabayonga and Bafwasende.

Uganda has requested the Security Council to allow it to use Bangoka International Airport in Kisangani to pull out some of its troops and heavy equipment that are in Bafwasende. The leader of the Council delegation referred to this matter. We are pleased that the United Nations has accepted for us to use Kisangani, but this is still "in principle", and we understand that the matter has been referred to the Joint Political Committee of the Lusaka Agreement. I would like to emphasise that the use of Bangoka International Airport is very crucial, because our 65th Battalion in Bafwasende has no other route on which to pull out. So we appeal to the Security Council to assist us in this exercise.

The second issue on which my delegation would like to update the Council concerns the natural resources of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Members may recall that during the Council debate on 3 May 2001, in this Chamber, following the release of the report of the Panel of Experts on the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and Other Forms of Wealth of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (S/2001/357), the Uganda delegation stated that the Government of Uganda took the allegations in that report seriously and welcomed the opportunity to lay these matters to rest.

On 23 May 2001 the Government of Uganda appointed an independent judiciary commission of inquiry to investigate these allegations. The Government has named Justice David Porter, a distinguished retired British judge, as the chairman of this judiciary commission. Other members include Justice Joseph Berko, a judge of the Court of Appeal, and Mr. John Rwambuya, a retired Ugandan senior United Nations official.

This independent commission will investigate these allegations in an open and transparent manner and will report to the Government for appropriate action. The commission will start its work on Monday, 4 June. The Security Council will be updated on the outcome of this commission at the appropriate time.

I am sure that the members of the Security Council who were on the team to the Great Lakes region may recollect the undivided attention they received from President Museveni, who spent many hours, putting almost all other State matters aside, discussing and sharing with the members of the team all possible combinations of formulas to find a solution to the problem of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Such attention and concern by President Museveni was not accidental. It demonstrated the seriousness that Uganda attaches to the need to end the conflict and to have peace in the Great Lakes region in general and in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in particular.

Uganda has strongly maintained that the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement addresses two fundamental areas which are at the root of the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region. It addresses the security concerns of all countries in the region, including the Democratic Republic of the Congo and its neighbours; and the internal dimension of the conflict, through a national dialogue involving all the Congolese parties with equal say. This is part of the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement.

Uganda therefore reaffirms its support for the inter-Congolese dialogue under the neutral facilitator, Sir Ketumile Masire. I would like to inform the Council, through you, Mr. President, that President Museveni and Sir Ketumile Masire concluded a meeting along those lines this morning in Kampala.

Uganda believes that our security will be ensured if there is peace and stability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and we believe that this can be achieved through the most viable framework, which remains the Lusaka Agreement. That is why Uganda's troop withdrawal from the Democratic Republic of the Congo would not affect our participation in the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement.

The President: The next speaker is the representative of Burundi. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Nteturuye (Burundi) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank you sincerely, Mr. President, for having organized this important public meeting on the Great Lakes region. I would also like to pay tribute to Ambassador Jean-David Levitte for his brilliant statement introducing the report of the Security Council mission to the Great Lakes region and for his leadership of the Council mission.

The delegation of Burundi welcomes the Council's mission to the Great Lakes region and, in particular, its visit to Burundi, which enabled the Council to examine and assess the conflict ravaging my own country and the region at large.

The Council's report has tried to deal with the main issues of the Burundi conflict: the problem of security and the future of the peace process. On security issues, the Government of Burundi is pleased to note that finally the Council was able to hear from the mediator and other leaders in the Great Lakes region about the danger of total war in Burundi due to spillover from the war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. My delegation welcomes the very clear message given by the Council to all the protagonists in the Burundi conflict.

In the course of its talks with the two rebel groups, the Council was also able to recognize that those groups regard the ceasefire as the lowest priority in their plans. As for the role of the region in seeking a solution to the security problem in Burundi, the Council will have seen that some are really committed to helping right now, while others are still reluctant and keep repeating to whoever will listen that there is no infiltration or cross-over along their borders with Burundi.

My delegation would like to reaffirm that the rebel groups and those that support them are nurturing the hope that there can be a military solution in Burundi, thus endangering the peace process. My delegation is equally convinced that some of Burundi's neighbouring countries have adopted an attitude that is contrary to the spirit of the peace agreement, despite the fact that they have co-sponsored it. The Security Council must therefore act without delay. It must receive responses from those countries and those armed groups to the proposals made to them by the Council during the visit to the effect that they must truly cooperate with the Government in settling security issues along the common border. The Council can no longer delay, because the longer the delay, the less likely it is that full-scale war can be averted. The Government of Burundi supports the position of the mediator and of some leaders in the region who are calling for the imposition of immediate sanctions on armed groups and those that support them. These sanctions are envisaged in the Arusha process and in the Lusaka process.

My delegation proposes that the next meeting with the armed groups, the third Libreville meeting, should be scheduled as soon as possible, and that the date set should be taken as a deadline for determining the definitive approach to be taken concerning the armed groups and other actors in the Burundi conflict. To wait any longer would be to spoil any chance of achieving an end to the Burundi conflict.

The Burundi Government is particularly pleased at the Security Council's proposal to establish a joint Tanzanian-Burundian commission to deal with the issue of refugees. Indeed, three weeks ago, a tri-partite agreement on repatriating Burundi refugees was signed in Dar es Salaam by the Government of Burundi, the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). My Government would like to repeat here that it is prepared to take in these refugees and calls on the Tanzanian Government to accept the immediate establishment of this joint commission so that together we can launch a campaign to mobilize for the return of those who wish to come back, who could

then return to their homes or wait temporarily in reception centres.

All questions relating to psychological and logistical preparations for repatriation, for receiving these people in Burundi, for the security aspects of repatriation and for reintegration — all of this has to be considered jointly by the three signatories to the Agreement mentioned earlier. The United Nations, through UNHCR, is invited to encourage this project and, for some time, to maintain the level of resources being used for the refugees currently in the camps in Tanzania. In making this proposal, the Burundi Government intends to help maintain the civilian nature of the refugee camps, and to end their use as centres for recruiting fighters, as places for organizing infiltrations by the rebel groups and as fall-back points.

The Government of Burundi has taken note of the intention of the Tanzanian authorities to repatriate the Burundian refugees. This is an interesting development, which the Government of Burundi welcomes. We invite all partners to work together to harmonize its realization. Certainly, such an operation will contribute to the progressive improvement of security within the borders of Burundi and enable those who are repatriated gradually to feel as safe as their brothers who remained in the country already do.

Specific proposals such as those I have just described deserve the support of the Council, as the many meetings between the Burundian and Tanzanian authorities have not yet yielded positive results on the ground.

The intensification of the war since last February has dealt a severe blow to the peace process, in particular to the implementation of the peace agreement, which has become difficult simply because of the fact of the war. The establishment of transitional institutions has been delayed because there has been no ceasefire, and people are hoping for peace and security above all else.

My delegation welcomes the Council's willingness to professionalize the mediation team. We especially welcome the proposal to strengthen the office of the Representative of the Secretary-General in Bujumbura and to broaden its mandate. The Government of Burundi has always hoped that the process will be brought back home to Burundi. We hope that the group dealing with the follow-up and implementation of the peace agreement will shift its headquarters from Arusha to Bujumbura, and that the question of the neutrality of some of the members of the mediation team will be settled once and for all.

In conclusion, the Security Council has now been to Burundi and to the other countries in the region. It is an encouraging initiative. Conclusions have already been drawn; action is now needed in order to prevent disaster in Burundi. We hope that the messages addressed to one and all will soon have a positive impact. If not, the Council will quickly have to reassess the situation and take further steps to ensure the well-being of the people of Burundi and the Great Lakes region.

For its part, the Government of Burundi has already demonstrated its willingness to encourage compromise solutions. It remains open to all attempts to implement the peace agreement insofar as is possible. Burundi pays tribute to the remarkable work carried out by Nelson Mandela, the regional initiative and the representatives of the Secretary-General on the ground, in particular Mr. Jean Arnault, and we hope that the momentum created by the recent Security Council visit to the Great Lakes region will not be lost.

Mr. Chowdhury (Bangladesh): I should like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this open meeting. We appreciate the presence earlier this morning of the Secretary-General and the statement that he made.

The Council mission to the Democratic Republic of the Congo was very useful. It demonstrated the Council's commitment to pursuing peace and security in a proactive manner. The report introduced by Ambassador Levitte bears testimony to the fact that the Council could, by taking such an initiative, make a difference in the areas of conflict. Colleagues participating in the mission deserve our great appreciation for their individual and collective contributions. I would like to pay a special tribute to Ambassador Levitte for his leadership in this crucial undertaking of the Council.

Bangladesh agrees with all the recommendations of the mission report. We will not go into details, but look forward to interacting with our colleagues in shaping the action to be taken by the Council on this report.

We recognize five major issues in the conflict on which our attention should be focused.

The first is the withdrawal of foreign forces. This requirement under Council resolutions must be fulfilled by all the parties, as stressed by the mission, without any further delay, in a phased and orderly manner. We would like to emphasize that the monitoring of the withdrawal, the blocking of any security gaps and the protection of civilians are fundamentally important aspects to focus on. We understand the difficulties to be expected with regard to gaining a clear idea about the administrative arrangements to be set up in those areas.

Secondly, the message we received from the mission report is the imperative of the inter-Congolese dialogue. We expect the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to facilitate the dialogue as outlined in the Lusaka Agreement. The international community must come forward with the necessary support. This really is the key to peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Thirdly, with regard to the question of "negative forces", we would like to underline that, in pursuing the Lusaka Agreement and subsequent plans, the parties must take a realistic approach. We stress that the resolution of the most complex and intractable conflict of recent times will naturally require the most courageous decisions on the part of the leadership of the region. It will require hard concessions, difficult compromises and, above all, a lot of pragmatism and courage.

In our view, the security concerns of neighbours of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and related issues will need careful consideration. Given the sensitivity of the issues, we stress that the imperative of justice should be pursued, with the ultimate goal being healing past wounds and promoting reconciliation between societies.

Fourthly, in view of the report of the Panel of Experts on the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, all concerned should have to assume due responsibility and adopt measures to break the nexus between the illegal exploitation of the resources of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the continuation of the war. Yesterday's *New York Times* editorial on the looting of the Congo deserves our particular attention.

With regard to the economic situation, we would like to underscore the appeal made by the team leader, Ambassador Levitte, about sending a message to the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank about the critical economic situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and its close linkage to the peace process. We also believe that the process to set up the Congo River Basin Commission should be expedited.

My final point relates to the preparation for the third phase of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC). With the recommendations of the mission to hand, we should now decide on concrete actions at our end. We attach the greatest importance to the preparations for the third phase of MONUC. In this regard, we support the recommendation in paragraph 120 of the mission's report and the outlines provided therein. The United Nations must now start the mobilization of the resources for this phase, which, as the Secretary-General noted in his last report, will be a major undertaking.

The Council mission brings us a worrying assessment of the Burundi situation. The Arusha process must not be allowed to fall apart. We would recommend serious consideration of that situation by the Council at an early date. Council members should give the next presidency of the Council a clear message on this.

Let me conclude by saying that Bangladesh appreciates very much the Secretary-General's statement to the Council this morning, particularly his emphasis on the need for adequate resources to address the humanitarian situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo; the proactive initiatives he has already taken in the area of human rights; and the special attention he is giving to the issue of child soldiers with the dispatch of his Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict, Mr. Olara Otunnu, to the area. The Secretary-General's raising of the security situation in general and of the security situation of United Nations and humanitarian personnel in particular has been very timely. Yesterday, under the Arria formula, the Council had its first meeting in history with United Nations staff members to discuss security issues. We would like the Council to give special attention to that aspect in its follow-up to the report of the mission.

The President: There are still a number of speakers on the list. In view of the lateness of the hour, I propose, with the concurrence of members of the Council, to suspend this meeting until 3.30 p.m.

The meeting was suspended at 1.15 p.m.